



*The Department of Services for  
Children, Youth and Their Families*

*News*

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**Stevenson House Detention Center Earns National Re-Accreditation**

MILFORD \_ Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families announced today that The William Marion Stevenson Detention Center has earned a three-year accreditation with the American Correctional Association (ACA), a nationally recognized organization that sets standards criteria for adult and juvenile correctional facilities. It is the facility's fifth re-accreditation since 1988 and the first since the move to a new, larger facility in January 2003.

The detention facility, known as the Stevenson House, serves pre-adjudicated youth from Kent and Sussex counties. The facility provides a safe, secure, residential environment for detained youth while they receive a program of education and professional counseling.

"One of Governor Ruth Ann Minner's goals for the health, safety and self-sufficiency of every Delaware family is to focus on the prevention of crime not just punishment. We have a national model for a maximum secure care facility in Ferris School for Boys and strive for that same excellence in detention services," said Secretary DeSantis. "However, we have been chronically challenged by overcrowding and have engaged in private partnerships with organizations like the Annie E. Casey Foundation for ideas on how law enforcement, justice and the courts as well as the Delaware Children's Department can improve this aspect of the juvenile justice system."

The ACA reviewed several "quality of life" factors at the detention center including security, environmental conditions, academic and vocational education, social services, fire safety, medical care, food service, conditions of confinement, among others. The accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the ACA in 1870. The standards were developed by national leaders from the field of corrections, law, architecture, healthcare, and other groups interested in sound correctional management.

Secretary DeSantis says the Department "strives to think of the child first" in its efforts to provide a safe environment that fosters growth in troubled children so that they will become productive members of the Delaware community. "This re-accreditation truly validates the efforts of the Children's Department staff to ensure that there is safety, stability, self-esteem and sense of hope in every child," she said.

On any given day, the Children's Department provides services to approximately 8,200 children who have been abused, neglected, are dependent, have mental health or substance problems, and/or have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. For more information, please visit <http://www.state.de.us/kids/>.

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